

The Restoration Advisory Board (RAB)

Involving the Public

In keeping with the goal of full public involvement in installation restoration decisions and activities, the Army encourages creation of a Restoration Advisory Board (RAB). The RAB is a forum for discussion and exchange of information about an installation's environmental restoration program under Installation Restoration/Base Realignment and Closure (IR/BRAC) or Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS).

The primary purposes for establishing the RAB is to involve the local community in the decision making process for ordnance responses by:

- Making information about the ordnance removal processes, risks, and progress available to the public.
- Establishing a formal forum for public participation on the project.

Restoration Advisory Board members include representatives from:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or Army installation
- Local community
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- State environmental regulatory agencies
- Local government

A Restoration Advisory Board is NOT always established. The decision whether or not to form a RAB is made by the commander and the Corps' Life Cycle Project Manager based on the level of community interest in the project.

When a Restoration Advisory Board is established, the members are expected to:

- Provide input to environmental restoration issues to Army installations and regulatory agencies
- Hold regular meetings, which are publicly announced and open to the public at convenient times and locations
- Review, evaluate, and comment on project documents
- Recommend priorities among sites or projects
- Identify applicable standards for cleanup
- Propose cleanup levels consistent with planned land use as specified in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)

A key to understanding the purpose of the Restoration Advisory Board is recognizing the value of true public involvement.

A progressive and successful public involvement program prevents delays and assists, rather than deters, the project. A Restoration Advisory Board that represents the entire community establishes the basis for public rapport.

Establishment of the Restoration Advisory Board requires a careful, well-planned process.

- 1 Select co-chairpersons from the installation or Corps, and the local community
- 2 Select members from the installation, regulatory agencies, and community, via the RAB Membership Selection Panel
- 3 Establish procedures to handle membership resignations/additions
- 4 Define administrative, technical, and public affairs support responsibilities
- 5 Establish funding for public participation, and administrative and technical support
- 6 Implement communication program for community involvement and notifications

Selection of the community members who will be on the RAB follows its own five-step process.

Step (1)

Installation Commander or Corps' Project Manager (in consultation with the state and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) identifies diverse community interests (business/home owners associations, local officials, civic groups, environmental groups, environmental justice groups; i.e., low income/minority groups, etc.). For IR/BRAC projects, local land reuse committee members are included.

Step (2)

Installation Commander or Corps' Project Manager (in consultation with the same groups as in Step One) organizes a selection panel of community members to nominate RAB members who represent a cross-section of diverse community groups.

Step (3)

The selection panel identifies community interest groups that must be represented on the RAB, develops a solicitation process, and establishes the criteria for selecting RAB members. Usually, the selection committee announces participation opportunities through news releases and paid public notices. They develop a community interest forum to identify local concerns and levels of interest, and

RAB

establish a deadline for submission of the completed community interest forms. They mail letters of invitation, fact sheets, and community interest forms to selected groups and individuals. They place fact sheets and community interest forms in local information repositories. The selection committee then holds a public meeting to discuss the purpose of the RAB, to explain the solicitation process and member responsibilities, and to distribute fact sheets and community interest forms. At the close of the solicitation period, the selection committee develops the list of recommended RAB members.

Step (4)

Installation Commander or Corps' Project Manager reviews and accepts RAB membership list. Selection panel is disbanded.

Step (5)

Corps District sends selection letters to RAB members and response letters to all who submitted community interest forms. The final action is to publish notices of RAB membership and the meeting time for the first RAB meeting.

RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD



**U.S. ARMY ENGINEERING &
SUPPORT CENTER, HUNTSVILLE
PO Box 1600
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA 35807
256.895.1690**



**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
ORDNANCE AND EXPLOSIVES CENTER OF
EXPERTISE & DESIGN CENTER**